



City of Aberdeen

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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City of Aberdeen is hosting an All-Hands Meeting on Wednesday, September 1, 2021, at 11:00 a.m. at the Aberdeen MARC Train Station to Advance plans for Walkable, Inclusive, Vibrant Downtown, including Amtrak/MARC Train Station upgrades. Location of Meeting – Aberdeen MARC Train Station, 18 East Bel Air Avenue, Aberdeen, MD 21001.

Aberdeen, MD – Mayor Patrick L. McGrady will be hosting a meeting on Wednesday, September 1st at 11:00 a.m. to advance improvement plans for the Aberdeen Transit Oriented Development – Station Square Area including major upgrades to the Aberdeen Amtrak/MARC Station. The Mayor and City Council of Aberdeen expect to host staff from the offices of Senator Van Hollen and Congressman Ruppertsberger, the Harford County Delegation, Harford County Executive Barry Glassman, Harford County Councilmembers, Amtrak, State and Harford County agencies, and the U.S. Army Garrison Aberdeen Proving Ground leadership.

In announcing the meeting, Mayor Patrick McGrady said *“Aberdeen is honored to host all the folks across the Federal, State, and Local government to stand in the same room and talk about how we can move this long-awaited project to fruition. Working with our Senators, Congressmen, and State and Local Elected Officials, we know we can solve these long-festering issues of equity. We can invest in our blue-collar communities like Aberdeen, and we can show a real return on the investment of federal and state resources by spurring new private development and in creating opportunities for our citizens.”*

Congressman Dutch Ruppersberger said “***Investing in America’s aging infrastructure – including mass transit –is the best and most cost-effective way to create jobs, reduce congestion on our roadways and mitigates the effects of climate change,***” Congressman Ruppersberger said. “***I am looking forward to learning more about this project and working to secure federal resources to support mass transit improvements in a Maryland community like Aberdeen.***”

The purpose of the on-site meeting at the Aberdeen MARC Train Station is to bring all stakeholders together and move forward with a shared plan of investing in Maryland, Harford County, and Aberdeen’s future by making needed improvements at the Aberdeen Amtrak/MARC Train Station.

Aberdeen’s Station Square improvements are in line with President Biden’s goals for infrastructure projects stated in the American Jobs Plan (LINK: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/03/31/fact-sheet-the-american-jobs-plan/>) including: Modernizing Public Transit, Investing in Reliable passenger rail service, Redressing Historic Inequities and building the future of Transportation Infrastructure.

BACKGROUND ON MEETING and ISSUE: In 2012, the City of Aberdeen worked with the State of Maryland to create a downtown Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Master Plan and district, where property setbacks were reduced, the different kinds of zoning uses were expanded, and the hard work of rebuilding Aberdeen’s downtown was elevated. Since then, Aberdeen has taken many steps to increase opportunities for small business and encourage community building, with the 2020 approval of Aberdeen’s as a Maryland Main Street community. The multi-modal train station is the busiest bus stop in Harford County and is controlled by a variety of different government and quasi-government entities, including Maryland SHA, Maryland Transit, and Amtrak.

The Aberdeen Train Station needs significant upgrades. In 2012, during the TOD work, the City worked with the State on a Pre-preliminary Engineering Plan for improvements to make the Aberdeen Station better for transit riders and our community. The proposed phased improvements to the Aberdeen MARC/Amtrak Train Station include: 1) Removal of the pedestrian overpass that is a barrier separating Aberdeen’s Main Street, Bel Air Avenue from the residential and business community. This concrete behemoth structure built in 1982 makes it difficult for Aberdeen’s vulnerable “East Side” community to cross the rail line where they have limited access to fresh foods, job opportunities, and the rest of the City. This structure has effectively segregated Aberdeen into two distinct socially diverse areas and needs to be addressed. 2) Construction of a pedestrian underpass under the Amtrak/MARC line to make it safer and easier for everyone to access the rail

and move from one site to the other. 3) New transit waiting areas that are handicapped accessible to ensure equitable access for everybody traveling to and from Aberdeen. 4) Terraced plazas to improve the accessibility of the Train Station area. The proposed improvements will enhance this major transportation hub and asset for the City of Aberdeen, Harford County, and State of Maryland.

For background and overview of the Station Square Improvement project please view the attached video presentation: <https://youtu.be/1OqnF39KfaM>